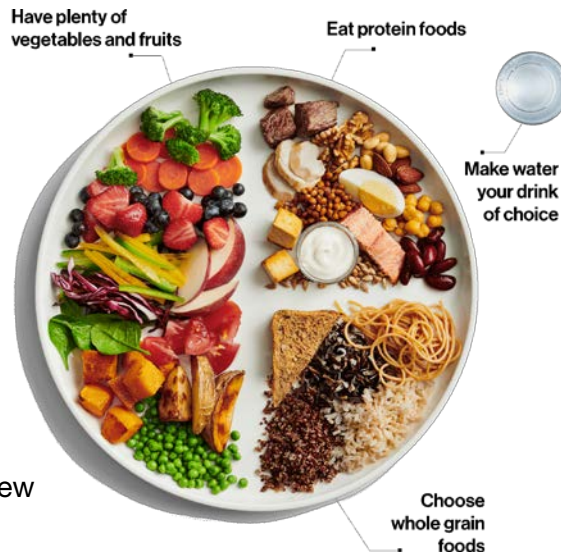


# Healthy Teens

December 2019 Parent Newsletter

## Canada's Food Guide 2019

Canada's Food Guide was released in January of 2019. Instead of only focusing on food choices, the new food guide also talks about where, when, why and how to eat. The areas where you live, learn and play can affect the food choices you make.



The key messages of the new food guide:

- Eat a variety of healthy foods each day.
- Have plenty of vegetables and fruits, including fresh, frozen and canned.
- Eat protein foods, and choose plant based proteins more often (e.g., beans, peas, lentils, nuts). Dairy and meat no longer have their own food groups, as they are both a source of protein. Choose lean meats and lower fat milk, yogurt, or cheese products.
- Choose whole grain foods such as oats, brown rice, whole grain bread, pasta and cereals.
- Include healthy fats in your diet daily.
- Make water the drink of choice. Low fat milk and unsweetened soy beverages are also healthy choices to meet calcium, vitamin D, protein and fluid needs.
- Read food labels, be mindful of eating habits, cook more often, enjoy your food and eat meals with others.
- Visit [Healthy Eating for Teens](#) to learn more about healthy eating habits and a positive eating environment for youth. Learn about healthy eating during the teenage years and how it gives the energy needed to focus, balance moods and perform better.

➤ For more information on **Canada's Food Guide, food choices, eating habits, recipes and tips, visit** <https://food-guide.canada.ca>

## Articles

Canada's Food Guide 2019

Electronic Cigarettes

In Alberta, Alberta Health Care covers the cost of eye exams by a Doctor of Optometry for all children until they turn 19. Many vision and eye health conditions have no symptoms and can only be detected through an eye exam. For more information about childhood eye examinations and to find an optometrist in your area, please visit [www.optometrists.ab.ca](http://www.optometrists.ab.ca)



## Electronic Cigarettes

### What are electronic cigarettes?

Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, vape pens, vapes, mods, tanks and e-hookahs, are battery-operated devices that have cartridges with liquid chemicals in them. These liquid mixtures are commonly known as e-liquid, or e-juice. The e-liquid is heated by the device to turn it into a vapour which is then inhaled. This is called vaping.

### What do electronic cigarettes look like?

Many electronic cigarettes look like regular cigarettes, and come in reusable and disposable varieties. However, some of the newer generation devices look like USB sticks, sharpies, car fobs, remote controls, and smartphones, and have become popular with teens because they are easy to conceal.

### What is in e-liquid?

It is hard to know what is in e-liquid because currently there are no labelling requirements. Health Canada is working on this. Common contents can include glycerol, glycol, propylene, and flavour additives. You can also get e-liquids with or without nicotine. Unfortunately studies have shown that teens are often unaware that e-liquids may contain nicotine. Many flavoured e-liquids are enticing to young people

(e.g., chocolate or cotton candy) and may give the appearance that vaping is less risky or harmful.

### Are e-cigarettes safe?

E-cigarettes are not harmless. Vaping can increase your exposure to potential cancer-causing chemicals. Recent studies have shown links between the chemicals in electronic cigarettes and heart and respiratory disease. In addition, heating of the e-liquid can create new chemicals such as formaldehyde and extract metal contaminants from the device itself. Nicotine use can alter teen brain development, lead to nicotine addiction, and increase the risk of smoking commercial tobacco cigarettes. It is also of note, that the flavour additives, while approved for consumption, have not been tested for safety of inhalation. The long-term consequences of using electronic cigarettes are unknown and continue to be studied.

### Will my teen try electronic cigarettes?

According to a large scale national survey, electronic cigarette use in Alberta is rising at an alarming rate. About 28% (~69,000) of Albertan students in



grades 7-12 have tried an e-cigarette, and 15% (~35,000) use them more regularly. Moreover, 34% of students believe that regular use of electronic cigarettes poses little to no harm to their health.

### What should parents do?

Alberta Health Services recommends talking to your teen about e-cigarettes. Discuss the facts about exposure to chemicals and nicotine and correct any misconceptions your teen may have. Since e-cigarettes do not leave a smell like tobacco, it will be harder to know if your teen is using electronic cigarettes. Watch for signs of use such as dry cough and mouth/throat irritation, as well as look for unusual attachment to items like USB stick, sharpie, car fob etc., as this could be an electronic cigarette.

➤ For more information and support, visit [Albertaquits.ca](http://Albertaquits.ca) or call toll free 1-866-710-QUIT